
If you believe you are eligible to vote and encounter difficulty registering, please contact the D.C. Board of Elections and Ethics at:

D.C. Board of Elections and Ethics
441 Fourth Street, N.W.
Suite 250N
Washington, D.C. 20001
(202) 727-2525 (voice)
www.dcboee.org

If the Washington, D.C. Board of Elections and Ethics is unable to help you, or to report a problem, contact:

U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Voting Section, Rm. 7254 - NWB
Washington, D.C. 20530
(202) 307-2767 (voice)
(800) 253-3931 (toll-free)
(202) 307-3961 (fax)
www.usdoj.gov/crt

This pamphlet is provided for informational purposes only, as an aid to further inquiry. The laws in many states are revised frequently, and may have changed since this pamphlet was issued. It is your responsibility to determine whether you are lawfully eligible to vote, and criminal penalties can result from voting when ineligible or making false statements on a registration form.

Issued December, 2000

U.S. Department of Justice

Civil Rights Division



Restoring Your Right to Vote



WASHINGTON, D.C.

The right to vote is an important civil right in a democracy as well as a civic responsibility, and yet many persons who have been convicted of a crime do not know whether they are eligible to vote. For both federal and state elections, the right to vote is controlled by the law of the state in which you live. Some states restrict the right to vote for persons who have been convicted of a crime. This pamphlet is intended to help you determine whether you are eligible to vote in the District of Columbia and if so, what steps you must take to be permitted to vote.

What law governs whether my felony conviction limits my right to vote?

The impact of a criminal conviction on the right to vote varies widely from state to state. Whether you can vote after being convicted of a crime is determined by the state in which you live, not the state in which you were convicted.

Can I vote while I'm incarcerated in Washington, D.C.?

You cannot vote in the District of Columbia if you are incarcerated as a result of a felony conviction. If you are a resident of another state who is temporarily incarcerated in Washington, D.C., you may be able to vote by absentee ballot in your home state. Consult the law of your home state regarding both criminal convictions and absentee ballots to see if this is a possibility.

I have been released from incarceration. How do I restore my right to vote?

In Washington, D.C., your right to vote is restored upon release from imprisonment.

What if my conviction was for a federal crime?

If the crime for which you were convicted would be a felony under the laws of the District of Columbia, the same rules apply.

What if I was convicted in another state?

The same rules apply for Washington, D.C., voters even if the conviction occurred in another state, so long as the crime for which you were convicted would be a felony under D.C. law.

What happens if I move to another state?

If you move to another state, your right to vote will be controlled by the laws of that state.

What are the District of Columbia's other voter registration requirements?

To register to vote in the District of Columbia, you must be:

- a U.S. citizen
- a D.C. resident
- at least 18 years old by election day.

When do I need to register to vote?

The District of Columbia requires registration forms to be postmarked at least 30 days prior to an election in order to be eligible to vote in that election.

Where do I go to register?

Registration forms are available at many places in Washington, D.C. including:

- D.C. public libraries
- fire houses
- police stations
- Department of Motor Vehicle offices
- Board of Elections office
- online at:
www.dcboee.org/htmldocs/votreg.htm

Registration is also offered at various public assistance agencies. Contact the D.C. Board of Elections and Ethics to find out which service agencies provide voter registration.